#1

SLACKERFRIEND

OCT 2025

what you'll find...

Film Reviews

Interviews With...

AL TUCK

the Orchids

BUZZCOCKS

THE BOOJUMS

And More!

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Slackerfriend is a digital music/art zine, created by Osty Gale.

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OSTY:

1. How did your music career start, from PEI & singing in church choirs, to Halifax, & your first bands, The Columbia Recording Artists & Bluegrass Lawnmower?

AL: It wasn't a church choir. It was the Confederation Centre of Boys Choir. It was a public choir, mainly focused on secular material. I then went to Halifax at King's College. I formed Bluegrass Lawnmower in 1989, and graduated Kings in 1989. I had one band in college: The Columbia House of Recording Artists.

2. How did Bluegrass Lawnmower, which existed from 1988 to 1992, begin?
Charles Austin, & Henri Sangalang performed with you on those tracks.

These cast of players, would go on to front their own bands (Super Friendz, Flashing Lights) years after Bluegrass Lawnmower broke up...

AL: Bluegrass Lawnmower originated from a friendship between myself & Harry Norris at university, where we bonded over Country/Blues music and jazz records. Harry, a talented musician, myself, who was learning guitar, along with a banjo player named Paul Mandell, formed the group after Paul sought a more inclusive musical community. The lineup fluctuated with friends like Charles and Henri, & eventually Matt Murphy joined. Although I initially resisted naming my 1994 debut LP "Bluegrass Lawnmower," it reflects the contributions of the same people who supported the project, ultimately being released under the "No Action" band name, capturing the essence of the collective effort. The rhythm section also appeared on "Brave Last Days."

3. Would you ever release a boxed set of all the early Bluegrass Lawnmower recordings/outtakes?

AL: Well, you're the first person to ask, so that's flattering, that you're interested. I did put some of it up on Youtube, with some of my early childhood drawings as visuals.There's more that came in after my fire in 2003, that friends had on tapes. So, that would definitely be something to do, but I don't have the budget to do that with on-going current projects at the moment. Maybe there'll be more interest in it down the line, and we could fit it in later.

4. Of all the songs you've written, which of your songs feel most personal to you & Why?

AL: Most Personal. Woah. Well, the one I wrote on the day my daughter was born, that would have to rank up there. Although it doesn't directly pertain to that.
The songs called "What Kind of Soul" (2009, Food For The Moon).There's so many personally personal songs.

5. Which emotions are hardest for you to express in your music?

AL: Hmm. Woah, which emotions hardest to express? You'd have to think for days on that one...

6. Songs like "Buddah", "Face Down On The Page", or "Her Cloudy Trophies Hung", do you view these songs differently now than when you wrote them?

AL: "Her Cloud Trophies Hung", that's from the Bluegrass-era, so you have heard that?

I have heard that, yeah!

AL: Oh okay. I've raided the melody to that song, a couple of times later. I think that turned into the song "We'll Eliminate Ya!" Big Sugar covered that one. That tune went through a couple different titles, and it's an instrumental, so it simply amounts to the same thing... Well, no, no it doesn't because I've reused it, re-mined it, again and again really. But the others, "Face Down on the Page", and what was the other, "Buddah"?

Yeah, "Buddah".

AL: Well "***Buddah***" I've been thinking about that song lately, I've heard it in the car. That song has remained interesting, at least in terms of myself, because it has to do with migration. Now later in life, with the help of the song, considering what's best. "Face Down on the Page"? Well I'm proud of that one ,but it's not a positive song. I would avoid it. I don't often feel exactly that bad. I think it's written from the Point of View of a recently-deceased person. That was kinda cool in the 90s. But there's enough depression & negativeiy now, need to have something positive.

7. How do you strike a balance between vulnerability & storytelling within your lyrics?

AL: Disclosure vs. privacy. Well, sometimes, you can switch persons, kind of like Bob Dylan does. You can choose which pronoun you want to use, you can use "he" instead of "me". There is definitely a balance you have to find, and with rewriting, you find it. I would have to say I disclose more in my songs than most people do. I want to be pointed, not always, but if there's a point to it, I want to sing about it.

8. How do you know when a song is "finished"?

AL: Some songs feel finished right away, others never quite are. I do most of the writing in my head before ever touching a pen; just humming and working it out. By the time I actually write something down, the song is usually almost done. Some don't even need to be written; they're just there. Others take more work, and these days it's more about rewriting than chasing the initial spark. I used to think I had to capture everything in the moment, but over time I've learned to trust that I can come back to an idea later and still make something worthwhile.

9. Both "Fair Country" (2015), and "My Blues Away" (2005) celebrate anniversaries this year (10th & 20th). What are your reflections on these LPs now?

AL: Oh thank you! I didn't know it was the anniversary. Happy anniversary to those LPs. But there's a study in contrasts. "**My Blues Away**" took another 5/6 year gap of records. David Hillier, set me up with his assistant engineer, Darren, and they brought in some hot shots, additional recordings at Sonic Temple in Halifax, in 2003. **(continued next page)**

Jeff Arsenault, Bryan Bourne, and Matt Murphy are on it. I also recorded a quick session in 2001 at The Woodshed, Blue Rodeo's studio in Toronto, which took a long time to get it together.

Fair Country. We rattled it off in 2-3 days. That was the easiest, and established a pattern for me, for speed and working. Aaron Comeau, in Toronto, we knew some of the same musicians, and he had this excellent studio, an old Railway Trailer, and the players would line up, we could see each other in he engineering board. He would double my parts.

10, Do you prefer performing with a band backing you, or doing solo performances?

AL: It's tough to say. I enjoy playing with a band—especially if they're into it, but it's often last minute and unprepared, which can be hard on them. I've gotten better at leading those kinds of setups. Early on, even with a steady band, I was a bit of a mess. But I've learned to make the most of pickup bands without things getting too chaotic. That said, playing solo is great too, if the sound is good and the crowd's with you, there's total freedom.

11. With *Arhoolie* & *Brave Last Days* now being 31 years old, what are your reflections on recording those LPs and that time in your life?

AL: In 1993, I spent a lot of time recording Arhoolie, pulling out all the stops with a big studio production. But it ended up being too busy for the label's taste. They wanted something simpler. So, they booked us for a month-long session at East River, an empty house with Brendan McGuire. During that time, JALE also recorded their debut LP. With a week left, we managed to record Brave Last Days, which was a more efficient effort. By 1994, I was proud to have two LPs out in one year, even though I was still working on my live performance and dealing with gear issues. It wasn't always smooth, but I was determined, even if it felt like I was shooting myself in the foot at times.

12. Is it possible for boxed sets of Arhoolie & Brave Last Days, with outtakes, to be released in the future?

AL: Oh man, that would be amazing! I'd love to see everything collected in a box set. But the idea of actually pulling it off feels overwhelming. I'm working on two double albums, and just quoting the cost is daunting. I've never done vinyl before, and there's so much to handle; artwork, layout, all of it. You really have to be your own archivist. Honestly, I'd need a generous sponsor to make it happen. It'd be wonderful, though.

13. Were there any musical projects you wanted to partake in, that never got off the ground?

AL: Back in the '90s in Halifax, Colin MacKenzie, who ran Murderecords and managed me, was really into jazz drummer Jerry Granelli and even set up a collaboration between him and Buck 65. I was interested, but not enough to ever play with Jerry myself. He once said to Brock Caldwell (from No Action) about wanting him as a drum teacher in the next life.

Collaborations have never been something I actively seek out. My young son wants me to team up with rapper Connor Price, but I don't think that's the right fit. I heard Six Too might've done a dub remix with Charles, though I'm not sure if that ever happened. Those tapes might still be with Terry Pulliam at SoundMarket. I'm Happy I got to collab with Jah'Mila, from Halifax.

13. Your most recent release, "*Water Blood, and Whiskey*" is a 3-CDr set. Why a 3CD set?

AL:
That was just because, since the Gene tribute, during, before and after that, I accumulated a wealth of recordings within that Toronto studio with Aaron Comeau. It basically amounted to 3 CDs and then I just needed to differentiate the different concepts. At first I was going to call it "Friends", "Family", and "Flat". I think most of the songs on that 3rd disc, were written after I had realized something. So most of those songs on the 3rd disc are more recent material. The 2nd disc is all Family, even my daughter sings on it. It;s all about the family tree. The 1st disc is all about friends, deaths of close friends, the public life and strangers. That kind of thing. Those are the themes. Blood being thicker than water. I don't know where Whiskey compares to blood, that's e ven thicker...

14. On "Water Blood & Whiskey", there's a song co-credited to the late musician Matthew Grimson, "Family Photo". How did that song come about, was it previously recorded by Matthew?

AL: That's an old song. That we wrote, in the mid-90s, in my apartment in Halifax. We were just hanging out. He had a more spontaneous work ethic for songwriting and jamming. I think his enthusiasm inspired it. I think all I had was a mandolin, and so in the kitchen, he would write down ideas with pen and paper, as we riffed on it. We realized we both had the experience of hiding out at family events, as kids hiding out under the steps. We both felt like we experienced something like that. We both wrote it. It was one of those songs where it was very equal. I had the tune to that already. Now he never recorded it, or played it, but he did sing along to it with me live

Bette and Wallet, a Quebec duo at the time, Mary Beth Carty, and her Quebecois boyfriend performed the song regularly on the Quebec Folk circuit, & included it on their LP, ***Voici*** (2008). She got the words off of me, when she got the song to record off of me one time. They interpreted as a more Scottish-folk influence. It's a neat version.

15. You've mentioned you have a new LP due for release, some time in the future. Will it be another 3CD set? Will there be a band backing you for that tour?

AL: Well I can't confidently predict anything like that. But we'll see. I want to represent each antiquated format. The next one I made, and I only made 50 copies, called "All That Fairy Glamour". That is on cassette only, and I've requested those that have it, to not share it online. I've been sitting on it since my divorce. I haven't done 8-track yet. The big question for me is where do I go from here? I haven't even recorded those yet.

16, What have you learned about yourself through songwriting?

AL: That I need enough time & space for it. That's one thing you learn. You come to realize you're just not being a slack-assed loser. You learn not to over-commit in too many directions, and to just stay in the zone. **(Continued on next page...)**

17, What were your thoughts on the Piggy Reunion in Halifax, n May 2025?

It was great to see Paul again, after many years. I got a thrill of seeing them perform again, and catching up with Paul the following night at my show in Dartmouth. They didn't sound as far out as they did in the 90s, but it was great none-the-less!

18, Any Current listens?

The Neville Brothers – **Brother's Keeper (1990),** Big Mouth Browne; Bob Dylan, especially at home; Neil Conway from Newfoundland, Matthew Grimson, two dubbed collections of his LPs & Lee "Scratch" Perry – **Super Ape (1976)** is also a frequent listen.

19. With 4 Decades of music under your belt, how do you want to be remembered, with your legacy to the East Coast musical landscape?

I'm not sure I need to be remembered. I might be, but I've learned not to worry about that. I used to feel more involved, like I had a place in it all. I didn't have protégés, but some younger peers clearly took inspiration from what I did, which is flattering. It felt good to be part of a vibrant music scene.

FILM REVIEWS:

Jaws (1975) - Dir. Steven Spielberg, Starring: Roy Scheider, Richard Dreyfuss, & Shaw. The film is set in the 1970s in the New England town of Amity Island, in which a killer Great White shark attacks the townspeople and tourists during the summer season.

The 50th anniversary release of the classic Spielberg film was re-released in Cinemas this summer. I will admit, this was my first watch of this dark, cult classic film. I happily viewed this in the cinema, where it was meant to be viewed. The foreboding and tense soundtrack by John Williams, is what everyone knows after 50 years, but hearing it within the context of the film, brings the most thrilling scenes of the film, such as the boating scenes, to a pedigree that movies have tried to imitate since, but have failed. The action sequences, and effects, still s tand pretty well for the time, especially the work with special effects within the water, and blood. I'd recommend this film to others, especially those who haven't seen it fully, to see it at the Cinema for the best viewing experience. You won't regret it.

Caught Stealing (2025) - A Dark Comedy Crime thriller, directed by Darren Aronofsky.

Crime Drama thriller films are my favourite. With an action-laden film with Caught Stealing, and a ripping soundtrack, featuring both old (Buzzcocks), and new (IDLES) punk bands as the backdrop, the film sets up the audience for a wild, action-packed ride, while keeping the audience guessing as to what is going on, and why the main protagonist, Hank, is doing what he is doing. The film is set in late 90s New York City. Hank, an alcoholic, and former star Baseball player, ends up working in the criminal underworld, risking both his friends, & families lives, trying to save his own. I thoroughly enjoyed the acting, pace, and special effects and camera direction in which scenes were directed. The scenes, action and dialogue kept me watching intently, in my seat. The pacing, and in which the viewer is kept guessing as to what will happen next, was interesting. In my opinion, the film worked well to set out what it needed to do, and was a great movie to finish off the Summer months. ☆☆☆

WEAPONS (2025), Mystery Horror film, Zach Cregger.

The setting of the film is in Maybrook, Pennsylvania. The film has a non-linear narrative plot, shot in differing moments wherein the main characters stories join at various points throughout the film, and focuses on the mystery of 17 school children going missing at the same time. The musical selection of "Beware of Darkness" by George Harrison to open the film, as well as having MGMT feature in the closing credits, were both phenomenal choices, and added to the eerie feeling the film was going for. While I enjoyed the film for its non-linear narrative, soundtrack, ensemble cast, as well as directing style, I felt some points of the film were slower than they should've been, and some parts were a very slow burn. That said, the film grew on me, as I continued watching. I would recommend this film to people who enjoy darker, mysterious films, with non-linear narratives, in which the viewer is tasked to think about the plot, and why things are happening. It's like candy, for the brain.
☆☆☆☆

Pavements (2025) Dir: Alex Ross Perry & **Pavements: Slow Century (2002)** Dir: Lance Bangs

Music Docs on America's Best 90s Slacker Rock Band. Enjoyable for the talking-head history of a bands beginnings, and eventual endings. The hype around Pavements (2025) got me good enough to watch the film, I didn't enjoy it nearly as much, due to the comedic sub-plots found within the part film/part biopic. It lost the plot with what it was setting out to achieve. I enjoyed seeing/hearing Rehearsal sessions, & new music from the band's latest tour in 2022. Although, it was forgettable. Slow Century, I enjoyed much more, and it was the style of doc on musicians & bands I enjoy most, discussed in linear context, filled with i nteresting archival and live footage of the band performing in bars and clubs across the US and abroad, interviews with band members as well as Thurston Moore from Sonic Youth, and memoriabillia flashed across the screen, showcasing a great archival mindset of Bangs, as well as the Band themselves, which I thought would be highly enjoyable to other fans of Pavement. The doc runtime could've been longer, with more talking heads featured though.

Pavements: ☆☆☆

Slow Century: ☆☆☆☆

I'm here with Rhyss Poirier (guitar/vox) & Alexis Grant (drums) of Truro power duo, the Orchids!

Starting off, how did you two meet and decide to form the Orchids?

Well, we met in high school. We were both in the symphonic band together.

We also did a school rock band course together. We found out we had similar music tastes.

That Summer, we decided to jam. It started out as a White Stripes cover band.

We'd just practice all White Stripes covers in Rhyss' basement, and began our

journey into cover other songs by other artists: Queens Of The Stone Age, Kyuss,

Descendants and Sloan covers, but then writing our own music with all of our

influences combined.

Did you guys ever record those covers?

Alexis: The only cover we've recorded, which is the one cover on their album, is

'50s ladies by Elevator To Hell.

Was there a shift in casually playing & eventually getting your first gig?

Alexis: We got asked to do our first show after jamming together, in September 2023. We just started playing together that summer. We've been asked to play shows, now for the past year or so, we've been playing 3-4 shows a month now.

How long have you've been involved in music? Any early projects before the Orchids?

Rhyss: I got into music when I was about nine. I started playing drums. I started on drums like a year before I ever touched or took any guitar lessons, then a year after that, I started playing guitar, then I did both for a while, then I really focused on guitar a lot. I've been in a covers band.

Alexis: I grew up around music—my parents were super into it, always going to shows. I was listening to Black Sabbath as a toddler. I started drums at 10 and played in a cover band with friends. The Orchids is my first real band outside of school.

How does being a duo shape your writing and recording process vs. a trio?

Rhyss: I don't see it as limiting. I started by writing riffs that sounded cool, then brought them t o practice. Over time, I got into heavier Stoner Rock, started using two amps and more fuzz to fill out the sound. We like recording live off the floor—raw and DIY, with minimal overdubs. It keeps things real.

Alexis: Being a duo actually makes things simpler. With good gear, volume's not an issue, and fewer parts mean tighter songs. Recording's straightforward too—just drums, guitar, and vocals. It feels more focused compared to bigger bands with lots of moving parts.

Rhyss: Yeah, and you can also pull up to any sized venue and play. Yeah.

Alexis: You don't have to worry about venues.

Rhyss: Yeah, we can play really small places if we needed to. I guess the volume or amps take up the third and fourth member of the band, if you want to say that.

Osty: What are some pros and cons, I guess, of keeping the band as a two-piece?

Rhyss: I think the only con is when soloing live, there's not a rhythm under it. I think that, well, we were able to do it on the record because we could overdub somrthing under it. Cons aren't really much of anything.

Alexis: Yeah, I can't think of any. It's a lot of pros, it's been pretty good overall.

Are you working on any new songs for a 2nd LP?

Alexis: We have been. I feel like we've had new songs since we even before we finished like recording the first album. We definitely don't have enough for a second record yet. I'd say we're probably about halfway there.

Rhyss: About five songs.

Alexis: Yeah, and we've been playing them a lot in our sets. like, our sets nowadays it's not a ton of stuff from our first record.

Rhyss: 5 or six songs from our first record.

Alexis: I think the second records going to be pretty loud, more in your face.

Has the approach to songwriting changed since you guys started?

Rhyss: Not really. It's mostly a formation of me and my room just plucking away and finding something cool. I'll record with my phone and then I'll show her at practice. Most of the time, there's a loose form. Sometimes it sticks. Most of it sometimes it doesn't.

What's coming next for The Orchids - Touring or Music Videos?

Alexis: We haven't toured yet - school keeps us busy, and we've got scattered shows every month. But we'd love to tour one day, ideally opening for a band we admire, like Conductor.

Rhyss: Yeah, we're tossing around some ideas.

Alexis: We've talked about doing a music video too;got someone who might help, but we've just been swamped with gigs and writing.

Rhyss: Writing's slower lately since we live an hour apart and haven't practiced in months.

Alexis: Our shows have kinda become our practice time.

Rhyss: Stuff's still being written, just hard to finish right now.

What have you been listening to recently, as far as either influences or just in general?

Alexis: Recently, I've been listening to a lot of WINDHAND. I've been listening to DIE SPITZ.

RHYSS: Yeah, DIE SPITZ. "Something to Consume" has been on a loop.

Alexis: Frankie and the Witch Fingers, I just saw them play live in Montreal, a day ago. It was insane. I'm always listening to Queens of the Stone Age and KYUSS. They're my #1 favorites. Also Brutus, Uncle Acid, and The Well.

Rhyss: Thin Lizzy, Die Spitz, Conductor, of course, Elevator, Melvins.

Any favorite Melvins records?

Rhyss: Mainly the two I go back and forth on as Houdini and Bullhead.

Are there any underground or local acts you think more people should know about?

Alexis: Conductor Grimestone's awesome as well. 10-Slip's great. The Boojums are popping up. They deserve the popularity.

Are there any local Truro acts that are popping up besides you guys?

RHYSS: The Dialtones, they're cool. They're from town.

ALEXIS: Eat lead Tracy, we just played with. A two-piece punk band.

What was it like working with Chad Peck from The Kestrels?

Alexis: It was awesome!

Rhyss: Amazing. He was super helpful, encouraging, and open to experimenting even while we were still finding our sound. His experience really elevated the music.

Alexis: And he let us use all his gear, which was super cool.

Alexis: His pedal and guitar collection is insane—some of it was wild to play with.

Rhyss: I'm already thinking about what I want to use next time we're there.

Alexis: Didn't you use a J. Mascis signature guitar?

Rhyss: Yeah, the older model.

Alexis: And Chad brought in Jeff McDonald from the drum room.

Rhyss: Jeff helped you get your favorite drum sounds on the record.

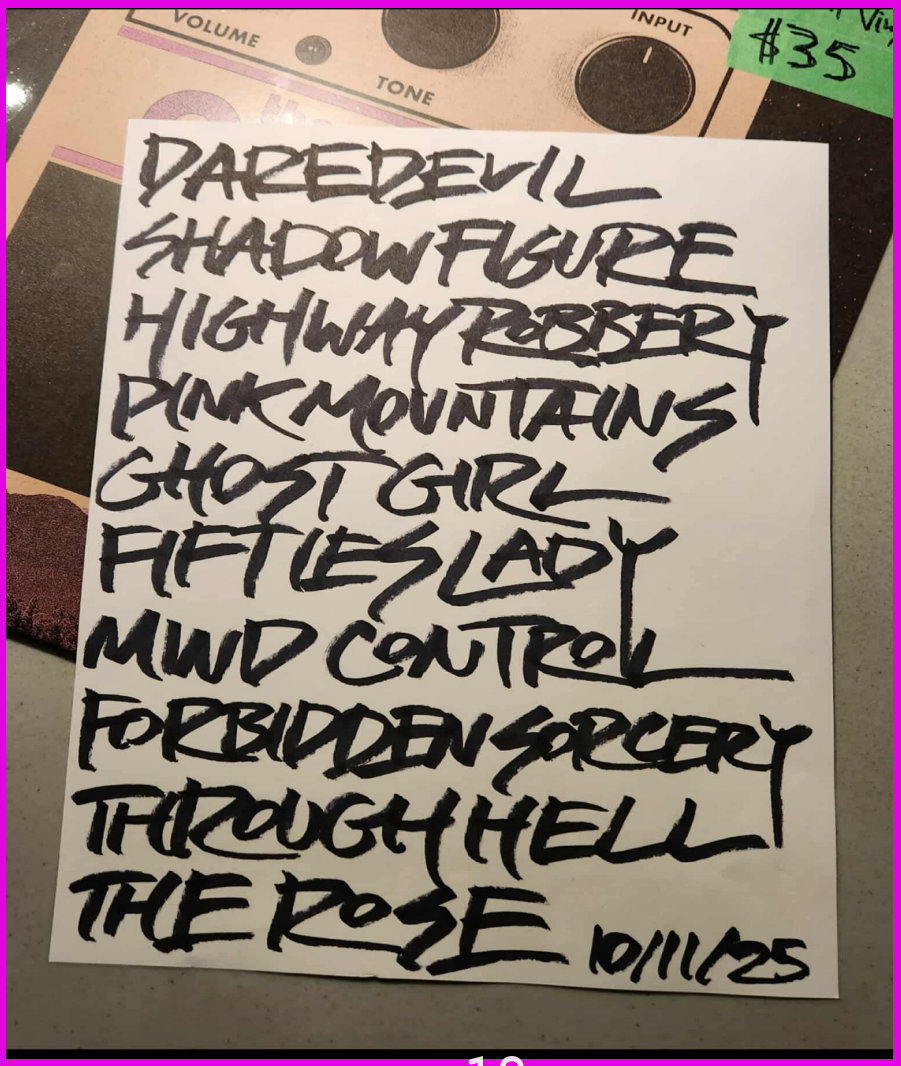
Alexis: Yeah, he lent me his Ludwig Supraphonic—I loved it so much I bought my own, the 100th anniversary edition. Jeff introduced me to it.

Any producers you'd love to work with in the future?

Alexis: Steve Albini would've been a dream. That would've been huge.

Rhyss: Joe Barresi would be great—he's done a lot of awesome stuff QOTSA and Red Fang. Eric Valentine too—his production is top-tier. He recorded Songs for the Deaf, which sounds incredible. Also Death Row loves Nomad. Rob Schnapf would be cool too.
He's worked with everyone from Elliott Smith to The Garden.

The Orchids Set, from 10/11/2025 Ashby Legion. Photo: Ryan Grant



On August 27, 2025 I made my way to the Lighthouse Arts Centre in Halifax, to interview Steve Diggle, of the famous UK punk band, The Buzzcocks. We chatted for over an hour. This interview has been edited for brevity and clarity.

BUZZCOCKS

Steve Diggle, of The Buzzcocks, performs at Lighthouse Arts Centre Halifax, on August 27, 2025. © Osty Gale

Welcome to Halifax, Steve!

Thanks a lot.

I believe this is the first time the Buzzcocks & The Decendents played Halifax? What brings you here?

We're on the same agency and did a few shows together last year, then talked about a Canadian tour, not sure it would happen, but now we're hitting places we've never played before, along with spots like Calgary, Vancouver and Toronto. It's great to play Canada—Canadians really love their rock & roll.

With Some Reality being released 25 years ago, what are your reflections on that album now, 25 years on? Any thoughts on a Reissue, with possible Outtakes?

I've got great memories of making that LP. It had a '60s vibe and a more natural feel, different from the Buzzcocks stuff. We recorded it in just four days—I'd rehearsed it in sequence, so we just played it straight through. Even had time for a few pints at the pub! It was done old-school: live takes, then overdubs. The producer used a vintage compressor from Quadrophenia—called it the "Magic Box" which gave it a warm, raw sound. "Heavy Hammer" was a first take—when the bass and drums came in, we knew it was perfect. Same with tracks like "Three Sheets to the Wind" and "Just Because." The album just flows, and I'm proud of it. There's a box set, Wheels of Time, with all four of my solo records. I'd love to revisit that, maybe even play some of it live. A reissue might be coming too. No outtakes—what you hear is exactly what we made.

With the 50th anniversary of the band coming up, are there any plans?

We've got a new album coming: Attitude Adjustment. I wrote it in January 2025, we recorded it soon after, and it's now finished. The label planned for an October release, but it's been pushed to January 2026. Hopefully, there'll be a couple of singles ahead of that. It follows Sonics in the Soul, but goes in new directions—still classic Buzzcocks in parts, but also more experimental. The title reflects that shift. I wanted to keep things moving, not just repeat the past. I'm aiming to put out an album every year now, like we used to. That's more exciting than waiting six years between records. This one's got energy, surprises, and a flow—I wrote the songs to work in sequence, like a proper album experience, not just a collection of tracks. Sonics did really well and felt like a fresh take on the Buzzcocks sound. With Attitude Adjustment, we're building on that—classic roots, but pushing forward. Tour's coming in 2026, & hardcore fans seem excited.

Over the years with upgrades in technology, has recording with the Buzzcocks changed much?

Yeah, we record digitally now—computers handle the multitracking—but for this album, we used a hand-built 1970s console by Carney Plunker, known for his Krautrock work. It's old-school, used by musicians like Bowie and Marley, and now lives in a studio in Southam.

What are your thoughts on the Oasis Reunion?

I think it's great! I might catch their last Wembley show—flying in from New York that day. Liam actually lives just behind me; our gardens back onto each other. I don't know Noel well, but we bump into each other now and then. From what I've seen online, the reunion looks amazing—the sound, the atmosphere, the songs. You can just get lost in it.

In 1994, the Buzzcocks toured over in Europe with Nirvana. can you recall if Kurt Cobain mentioned any upcoming projects or how he was during that time?

I can't recall that, but I used to hang around him alot on that tour. Funnily enough, Kurt stated he loved "Harmony In My Head", specifically the vocal sound. I told him "it's not much different than yours". He loved the Buzzcocks. He came to see us, and he said "Will you open up for us?" and that's how we ended up on that tour. We got along well. Everyone in Nirvana we got along well; Dave, Krist, and Pat Smear. Fantastic time that was. But they loved us and we loved them.

Are there any Canadian artists you're currently listening to?

Mainly the old ones: Joni Mitchell, Neil Young. Zuma is still one of the greats, especially Cortez the Killer. And of course, Rockin' in the Free World and all that. I heard some Rush on a flight recently. Never got into them before, but it sounded great. Amazing guitar tones. I need to dig deeper.

I'm curious if there were any pre-punk classic rock music yourself and other Buzzcocks memberes enjoyed?

I grew up on '60s music: The Who, The Kinks, The Stones. My first Beatles album was Help, a birthday gift when I was about 10. I got into Dylan for his lyrics and feel, plus Motown, Donovan, and later, Led Zeppelin—raw, bluesy, almost proto-metal. Through my cousin, I discovered Chuck Berry, Little Richard, and Muddy Waters. I was also into Hendrix, The Velvet Underground, and garage stuff like The Stooges and MC5—real precursors to punk. Later came Krautrock like Can and Faust, which influenced the Buzzcocks' angular sound. That edge shows in songs like "Autonomy," inspired by Can's weird English vocals. I went for unorthodox guitar lines there – Johnny Marr later told me how strong that riff was. Even on my solo album Inner Space Times, we added a vacuum cleaner sound I'd recorded at 16 – just chasing that strange, captivating noise. That's always been part of our identity.

Are you aware of the Gorilla Biscuits' cover of "Sitting Round at Home" and how many people were introduced to the band via that cover?

Yeah, I think I've heard that cover—maybe once. I remember being in New York when someone mentioned it, and during lockdown, Jeff Ament did a version and messaged me about it. I'm good mates with Pearl Jam, but missed chatting with Jeff about it when we were both in Australia.
"Sitting Round at Home" is a great song—we stopped playing it for a while but brought it back recently. The tough part is time—we only get 45 minutes on this Canadian tour, sharing the bill with Mattstagraham and The Descendents. In the U.S. we get an hour, and in South America, sometimes two, which lets us dig deeper into the setlist. I prefer showing the full scope of the Buzzcocks, not just the hits. It's a shame we're so limited tonight, especially for fans who might only see us once.

When Pete Shelley passed away, was it a unanimous decision to continue with The Buzzcocks?

Just before Pete died, we'd been doing shows and hanging out like usual—getting stoned in my hotel room, me covering the bill. A week before he passed, he told me twice he was thinking of retiring. I kept saying, "What are you on about? We've got more to do." After the last gigs, he flew home, and just before Christmas, I got the call: Pete had died. I was shocked; we'd been friends and bandmates for 43 years, not just

colleagues. We had a big show booked at the Royal Albert Hall, so we turned it into a memorial with guests, and then did a few other gigs we had lined up. I wasn't sure what came next, but I said, "If we're carrying on, we need to release new music." So we put out a single, Gotta Get Better, with Destination Zero on the B-side—a bit Stooges-like. It felt important to stay relevant, not just become a greatest hits act. I still love the hits, but new music keeps it alive. In the middle of all the grief, I wasn't sure whether to keep Buzzcocks going or go solo—but I just kept my head down and carried on.

JON CREEDEN & HIS FLYING HELLFISH

During the finale of Gobblefest XXXI in Sydney, NS, at the Curling Club, on October 12, 2025, I chatted with Jon Creeden, leader/vocalist/singer/punker of Jon Creeden & The Flying Hellfish. During our conversation, Jon discussed the LP Stall, his most memorable moments touring, touring struggles, and the future of The Flying Hellfish...

We're here with John Creeden of... John Creeden and the Flying Hellfish.
And you're originally from Toronto?

Jon: I'm near there, yeah.

Osty: Yeah, and you moved here to Louisburg

Jon:Louisburg, yeah. Highway 22.

So, what's been the most memorable moment of your career so far?
I mean, most enjoyable, I've gotten to go to Europe a couple times and that was really fun. Probably the first time I went to Europe with this band, Brutal Youth, in Toronto. I went over with them in 2015 and there was a show in the Catalonia region of Spain, yeah, and it was just a highlight for me. They put us up in like this really nice campground, not really a hotel, but It's the Mediterranean, it's all beautiful, and they made us a nice barbecue and it was just really cool. It was like farthest I've been from home and stuff, so that was pretty rad because I like to play music as a means to get to travel places and meet people.

That's definitely one of the main things I like about playing and doing shows or tours.
So, yeah, so that was a big one. 2015, when I got over to Europe for the first time. And getting to see your friends play every night is really fun, too. They're a really good band. I mean, they still are. They're real tight on that tour. It was so fun.

Osty:How would you describe the sound of Stall in just a few words?

Band-wise, I'd say it's like it's like Siamese Dream by Smashing Pumpkins meets Hot Water Music meets Tilt Wheel, I don't know what we're going for. It sounds like an aggressive, cathartic musical experience. Tere's a lot of catharsis in that album for sure.

With "Stall" being older, 2018, What are you working on now?

It's been a slow few years since COVID, but we put out an EP called Parti. We put out Parti in 2021 and I moved here from Ottawa so the core group of guys in Ottawa we kind of haven't been playing together as much. Like the band's always been like loose. It's like loosely made up of friends across Canada. So when I play Alberta, I play with a couple guys from this band called Quit It. I play Ottawa, Aerie, Ontario. I play with my old buddies that we always play with. Over the last few years I've been recording some stuff with my friend Bill, Your Pal Bill from Milton, Ontario. We're putting the finishing touches on that. So hopefully next year we're going to put out an EP or split album again. The last year has been pretty slow. Life got busy.

What song on your latest release has the most personal meaning to you?

Jon:The whole thing is pretty personal. It's like mostly written a way to deal with a friend's passing. But one of those I really like. I like the song as soon as I wrote it. It's just about trying to get through, like, the aftermath of when somebody dies. This is a generally crappy year, you know? Like, how do you just keep moving forward? By the time the song came out, COVID had happened and stuff, so it kind of took on this whole different meaning. So that's what I like about songs. They become different things, but mostly I wrote it about this friend who passed.

Jon: All the Hellfish stuff is just really been like cathartic lyric writing for me.I'd like to start a different band that's just for funsies. Silly joke songs.

What's one challenge you face on tour that fans wouldn't expect?

Jon: Finding food that's not just pizza. The amount of pizza, fast food meals you eat, and like any food people give you, you can get is appreciated. It's hard to like eat healthy when you're on the road. Especially the older I get. I found that last year especially. Hard to get time to go to a grocery store, especially touring Canada.

How do you stay creatively inspired during long stretches of touring?

J:Long stretches of what?

O: Of touring.

My buddy Jesse and I talked about this once. He's a singer-songwriter out in Vancouver. We both didn't write much, like, right after the pandemic. And he was just like, turns out I need to be out there doing things to process it and turn it into songs. I've never really been one to sit down while on tour and try to write songs. I definitely write songs more at home.

But, like, you know, sometimes when you're noodling around soundcheck, that's when you get a new riff comes through. Just that kind of stuff. I think tour is little snippets of things happening. I like to gather them up and then finally sit down and process it.

What are some uh music influences you still hold dear to your heart?

Tim Berry and the band The Veil.I really like that band. They're a punk band that was on Fat Records briefly. I saw them when I was a kid. I got to see them a couple times with The Veil. And then when I was playing acoustic in Ottawa, I got to open for Tim Berry. When he started doing his acoustic thing and it was really inspiring. They're not a huge band, but they're just good at what they do and they keep doing it.

Siamese Dream by Smash Pumpkins was just a big influence on me. I just love the layers. Stall's got a lot of layers. Guitar work and just vocal tapes and shit. I like that.
I like making the mixing engineer work.

O: The album and then the live performance, two different things?

J: It's fun when a band can, like, really do most of the things they're doing on a recording, but, like, it's not, yeah, a live show is always its own thing. The energy matters.

O: If you could collaborate with any artist, living or dead, who would it be? Why?

I mean, you know what? My wife mentioned Brian Wilson earlier. Of course, yeah. She was like, 'This is like in the Velvet Underground with Brian Wilson in the band.' I think Brian Wilson just gets, like, there's a guy who gets, like, the layers. He'd be pretty fun to work with.

00:11:39 [Me .]
So with future recording, how do you think any albums or singles will evolve?

I don't know. The stuff that's coming out is mostly just songs I wrote at the start of the pandemic. So it's pretty bummer to me. I think mostly, if Hellfish puts stuff out, it'll probably still remain on the mental health, catharsis side of writing and stuff. So, people can probably expect more of that shit.

I think I got an idea for a full-length kind of cooking, so... Maybe in the next couple years we get one more thing like put in.

J: Yeah, we're definitely slowing down.

Do you think Flying Hellfish will last?

J: I don't see a reason to break a band up per se or kill anything these days. Because everybody ends up getting back together. No, I think we'll keep playing shows to some degree for a while. As long as my friends want to get together and play, it's fun to do. We never put too much time into these things. We usually jam a couple times before a gig. That's about it. It's just a fun way to get together with friends in different parts of Canada, so hopefully keep doing it for a bit.

Jon Creeden & The Flying Hellfish, Curling Club,
Photo copyright: Osty Gale (10/12/2025)

THE BOOJUMS

How did your musical upbringing shape your sound today?

Willie: My musical upbringing has a lot to do with the sound we have now. A lot of the bands my dad turned me onto as a kid are big influences on our sound: The Clash, British punk stuff, The Beatles, The Kinks. Channelling the earlier rock & roll influences.

What were the first artists or albums that made you want to write music?

A lot of stuff. Back when I started writing music I was super into Johnathan Richman & The Clash. A lot of Wilco when I was younger; more song-writer rock music I was listening to. I was super into the Blues as well. That got my gears turning when I was first starting to write songs in high-school, in 2010/2011.

What sets The Boojums apart from your solo work or Boarding Party days?

It's a lot of things. It's more collaborative and less of a solo-thing. Sound-wise, it's more minimal in our approach, and live off the floor. A little bit scrappier than some of the Boarding Party stuff.

How does your songwriting process change depending on the band you're working with?

I don't believe it does that much. Every song is so different - some songs I write with other people, some I write on my own. Sometimes music comes first, sometimes lyrics first. There's no real difference writing-wise. Some of the songs I had for my solo stuff, or for another project called Beach Bait, which never got around to doing with either of those projects, which were re-worked into The Boojums. The songs are all a kind of mixed-bag.

The Boarding Party had a raw energy; What inspired that particular project?

Just wanting to get out to play music and play shows. I was pretty young when that happened, & was just a band to get my stuff out there.

How do you balance storytelling and sound in your songwriting?

The sound comes first. There's certain songs that have a storytelling element, per se. I want each song to have an imprint of ourselves in it. Some of the songs definitely have a story. Some of them, are less of a story, and more of a vibe. It depends on the song. It's a balance.

What drew you to name the new band "The Boojums"?

Sara & I were kind of thinking of doing a duo thing at first. We were thinking psychedelic vibes at first. I was looking through creatures from Lewis Carroll's stories. I found The Boojums & The Door Mice, through The Hunting Of The Snark, which was the only name that didn't have bands named after them. It's a common psychedelic vibe. I was quite surprised there wasn't a famous band name with The Boojums before. We both thought The Boojums was cool. The Door Mice could've been a cool folk-punk band.

How has being part of the Halifax music scene influenced your direction as an artist?

Willie: Definitely a lot. I remember being in Jr. High, listening to Q104, the Halifax rock music station religiously. Radio was the main outlet for me. Joel Plaskett was playing constantly, around the time Truthfully Truthfully came out. I remember seeing him opening for The Tragically Hip at the time with my dad, and found out he was a local musician. I discovered April Wine around that time, too. Sloan, of course. It's reassuring hearing people are from where you're from.

Sara: Talking about those older days, whether it was my dad showing me April Wine, or my uncle showing me all those Sloan CDs. My dad would always tell me about these local rock bands. There was always this misconception about the music scene in Nova Scotia.

Willie: The Halifax music scene is on fire right now. Back when i started playing in the early 2010s, there'd be a genuine folk punk scene, and then different rock scenes that would pop up. It's nothing like it is today. It's not like, this is a show for punks-only, or this is a show for folkies-only. There's an openness now.

Sara: When I first started playing with Willie, and then Skunk Motel, the scene is now so welcoming, and high-energy, compared to when he was first performing in the 2010s. The shows are packed. There are so many different, eclectic styles, and ages of people there now, which is cool.

Willie: It's way more welcoming, I find now, than when it used to be.

What's next for The Boojums?

We've got a new song out on Tuesday and there will be a new video out before then (10/13) and then we have the LP out on Halloween. We also have a couple gigs paired around that: a gig in Halifax on 10/25, Saint John,NB on Halloween, then going to Ontario in November.

Sara: We were just in the UK and hoping to do more over there, within the Spring/Summer 2026.

Willie: We're actively trying to get over there. If it can pay for itself, we'll try to get over there again.

How were the UK shows?

Willie & Sara: It was phenomenal. The shows were packed. We got to meet Mick Jones from The Clash, and Patrick got to play The Sex Pistols' drum-set during the show. Mick came to both of our shows during that run. He's the sweetest guy, very welcoming. A very cool time.

What was your first exposure to music growing up in Cape Breton?

Sara: Probably not what most people would have – there was always fiddle music around, but not as intense. There was always music on. Dad was always into the Blues. My dad played guitar. I remember getting CDs as a kid, and listening to them with him.

Who were your earliest influences on bass or as a musician in general?

I haven't played bass that long, maybe only 4-5 years now. I started by playing upright bass with Willie. I began with guitar at first. At the time, Willie was playing more bluegrass/ country stuff. I was getting into old bluegrass material & Elvis music. That's when I got into more punk stuff, such as Bill Black. Then I was playing more electric with Willie, and then Skunk Motel happened. That's where I started learning how to write songs as well.

How did you and Willie first meet, and what led you to joining forces musically?

We met on a dating app. I was living in Northern Alberta. Our second date we drove across Canada. We just learned from it, if we can do that, we can do anything. I played bass when he was doing the country stuff,& now it's progressed to being married, & playing as The Boojums

How do you split your time and creative energy between The Boojums and Skunk Motel?

With Skunk Motel, we finished the Skunk Motel EP (Pretty Good 4 A Girl, 2025). As we were putting that EP out, that's when we were doing the writing for The Boojums at that point. They're different outlets for me, wherein I choose which songs and ideas can go for each band

Does your Cape Breton background influence how you play or approach music?

I realized as I grew up and started playing music, I always valued musicians and what they're doing. You tell some people you're a musician and they always want to hear more. The value I have for music and it's support, was the big thing.

How would you describe your musical chemistry with Patrick and Willie?

It's very fun to perform with Willie. It adds a whole other layer to it - and is very special Pat's been playing with Willie forever, for over 15 years. Both Patrick & Talon helped me learn bass, and make so many mistakes with, as I was learning.

What's a moment that made you realize The Boojums had something special?

The biggest thing there is how it feels so much like me. With The Boojums & the three of us, what you get is what you get musically. You're being your authentic true self doing this,& people are liking it, and the same kind of energy is also happening at the shows as well. This is a representation of me, and us, as musicians.

Are you working on any new material or collaborations outside of your current bands?
It's a goal of mine to collaborate with other people, and writing more musically with others as well. I'm new to songwriting. I'd like to start pushing myself, to write songs with other people. Nothing planned yet, but it is a goal in the back of my head. Willie & I are both pushing ourselves more often, hoping stuff comes out of it.

What are you most excited for in the next year, musically or personally?

With Skunk Motel, we're looking to get back to writing more songs, and recording again. With The Boojums, there's so many exciting things that I don't even know are going to happen; like the Mick Jones thing, so cool. I'm very excited to put out the album, as it'll be the 1st thing I've played on out physically. It's really fun working with the label We Are Busy Bodies & the label we're on, Having Fun Records. They're on the same wavelength as us. Whatever comes up in the next year, I'm ready for.

The Boojums, performing live at Gobblefest 10/13/2025 Sydney, NS © Osty Gale